Groundwater level

117. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether groundwater levels in the country, particularly in the capital have fallen sharply in the past few months;

(b) if so, whether Government/Central Groundwater Board have taken any effective steps to maintain groundwater level;

(c) if so, the details thereof and whether the groundwater becoming contaminated and unfit for consumption; and

(d) if so, the steps Government proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VINCENT PALA): (a) to (b) As per studies conducted by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), fall in the levels of groundwater has been observed in various parts of the country including NCT Delhi. Government has taken following steps to improve groundwater levels:—

- Implementation of a scheme on "Artificial Recharge to groundwater through Dug wells".
- Implementation of a demonstrative scheme on "Rain Water Harvesting and Artificial Recharge to Ground Water" in identified areas during the period 2006-09.
- Circulation of Model Bill to States/UTs to facilitate groundwater regulation and water harvesting for artificial recharge.
- Setting up of Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) for the purpose of regulation and control of groundwater management and development in the country.

In addition to the above, Government of NCT of Delhi is implementing Bhagidari scheme under which technical and financial assistance is provided to Resident Welfare Associations/ Registered Group Housing Societies/Government schools/hospitals etc. to promote rain water harvesting and groundwater recharge.

(c) to (d) The studies conducted by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) have revealed that quality of groundwater in most parts of the country is potable except in some areas where groundwater is contaminated. Incidences of natural contaminants like salinity, arsenic, fluoride and iron in groundwater have been reported.

The steps taken in this regard include:—

(i) Exploration of groundwater sources free from contaminants.

(ii) Providing technical guidance to the States in tackling problem of ground water quality.

(iii) Provisioning of safe drinking water to rural population under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) and organisation of mass awareness programmes in ground water affected areas.

(iv) Issuance of directions by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to limit the discharge of effluents within the stipulated standards and setting up of network of water quality monitoring stations and common effluent treatment plants.

Diversion at Matmora, Assam

118. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that diversion of a channel of Brahmaputra at Matmora in Dhakuwakhana area of Assam is under serious threat of erosion and heavy silt deposition converting large area of cultivable land to desert as reported;

(b) if so, the details of immediate measures taken by the State and Central Government to protect the flood affected people and their livestock by rehabilitating them;

(c) whether any Central package has been declared for these flood and erosion affected people; and

(d) if so, the details of utilization in Assam by State Government and beneficiaries till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VINCENT PALA): (a) Yes Sir. As informed by the State Government of Assam, a breach had occurred during July' 2008, in the embankment of river Brahmaputra at Matmara in Dhakuakhana area of Assam and consequently, the flood water entered through this breach to country side causing sever erosion and depositing huge volume of silt on paddy fields thereby converting the cultivable land barren and desert in almost all the inundated areas of Matmara. The flood water affected about 30,620 families covering 139 villages.

(b) As an immediate measures, the State Government of Assam sanctioned *ex-gratia* grant at the rate of Rs. 2000 per affected family and an amount of Rs. 4.67 crore was distributed. Gratuitous relief to the flood affected families was also distributed as reported by the State Government.

(c) In order to close the above breach, the State Government of Assam submitted a scheme "Raising and Strengthening to Brahmaputra dyke from Sissikalghar to Tekliphuta including closing of breach by retirement and anti erosion measures (to protect Majuli and Dhakuakhana areas against flood devastation by the Brahmaputra)" with an estimated cost Rs. 142.42 crore for implementation with Central assistance; which was approved and included